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SUBJECT: AUSTRIA: POSITIVE TOWARD U.S. NPT PAPERS

REF: STATE 43044

¶1. Econ/Pol Counselor met April 24 with MFA Disarmament Director Alexander Marschik, who will lead the Austrian delegation for the first week of the Prepcom, to discuss reftel papers. (Marschik's deputy, Andreas Launder, will take over during the second week.) Marschik said he expected Austria to be positively inclined toward both U.S. papers.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

¶2. E/P Counselor noted that the U.S. paper on civil nuclear cooperation was focused on support for the development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle, an issue where Austria has also put forward specific proposals. Marschik said that "any paper that supports" multilateralization would be likely to win Austrian support. He did, however, note some "strategic" concerns about making a strong link between multilateralization and pursuing nuclear energy overall, which he thought NAM countries might use to argue that multilateralization was an effort to deprive them of access to nuclear technology. Marschik reported that the French paper now being circulated in the EU made this link even more explicit. Marschik said that Austria, which opposes nuclear energy in principle, might also be concerned if the overall tone of the paper was too pro-nuclear.

NPT Withdrawal Paper

¶3. Marschik termed the proposal in the U.S. paper "excellent" and entirely in line with Austrian views. He thought it likely to win Austria's "full support." He did suggest that, with respect to actions in the NPT to dissuade a state from withdrawing, amending the text to say something like "actions in conformity with the UN charter," might be helpful.
Kilner